

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1698

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

ANKARA IMMEDIATE 380

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12552

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, UR, US, CY

SUBJECT: SOVIET APPROACHES TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM

REF: MOSCOW 12551

1. SUMMARY. THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS DO NOT SEEM,
AT THIS POINT, TO HAVE CHANGED THE SOVIET APPROACH TO CYPRUS.
WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS MAY BE CONSIDERING A
DOWNGRADING OF THEIR EMPHASIS ON A UNITARY CYPRUS AND ON THE
WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN THE INTEREST OF USING THE
CRISIS TO EXACERBATE STRAINS IN NATO AND TO CEMENT THEIR TIES
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WITH TURKEY. IF THE SOVIETS DO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION, THEY

CAN BE EXPECTED TO SEEK A LARGER ROLE FOR THE UN AND THROUGH THE UN FOR THEMSELVES. THE SOVIETS MAY, HOWEVER, REMAIN QUIESCENT ABOUT CYPRUS, GIVEN THEIR LIMITED CAPABILITIES TO AFFECT DEVELOPMENTS THERE AND THEIR INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE TONE OF DETENTE. END SUMMARY.

2. CONTENTS OF PRAVDA "OBSERVER" ARTICLE AUGUST 15 SUGGEST THAT SOVIETS HAVE NOT FULLY DIGESTED EVENTS OF LAST FEW DAYS. ARTICLE AMOUNTS TO REPETITION OF STANDARD LINE, BUT WITH HEIGHTENED EMPHASIS ON NEED FOR UN (AND PARTICULARLY SECURITY COUNCIL) TO PLAY BIGGER ROLE, ON BANKRUPTCY OF GUARANTEES ESTABLISHED BY 1960 AGREEMENT, ON INEFFECTIVENESS OF RECENT GENEVA ACCORD, AND ON NEFARIOUSNESS OF NATO DESIGNS. GREEK WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO'S MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS IS NOT COMMENTED ON, NOR IS TURKEY CRITICIZED.

3. SOVIET APPROACH TO THE CYPRUS ISSUE IS, AT THIS WRITING, SOMEWHAT INCONSISTENT. THE TREATMENT OF TURKEY IS PARTICULARLY CURIOUS. THEIR PRESS HAS NOT DISGUISED THE FACT THAT IT IS THE TURKS WHO ARE ON THE OFFENSIVE, YET THEY CONTINUE TO REFRAIN FROM DIRECT CRITICISM OF ANKARA. IF THE SOVIETS ARE AS CONCERNED AS THEY SAY ABOUT PREVENTING THE THE PARTITION OF CYPRUS AND SECURING THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES, THEN THEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO SHOW MORE SIGNS OF ALARM AT WHAT THE TURKS ARE NOW DOING ON THE ISLAND.

4. AT THIS POINT THE SOVIETS MAY BE TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT RELATIVE PRIORITY TO ASSIGN TO TWO BASIC, AND NOW LARGELY INCOMPATIBLE, SOVIET OBJECTIVES. THE FIRST IS THEIR DEVOTION TO A UNITARY AND NON-ALIGNED CYPRUS. THE SECOND IS THEIR DESIRE TO SEE NATO'S SOUTHERN FLANK DISRUPTED. UNTIL THE BREAK-UP OF THE GENEVA TALKS, THE ATTAINMENT OF NEITHER OBJECTIVE LOOKED VERY PROMISING. NOW, FOLLOWING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GREECE'S MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO THE SOVIETS MAY SEE INCREASED PROSPECTS OF A GENUINE RIFT DEVELOPING. SOVIET ENCOURAGEMENT OF SUCH A RIFT, HOWEVER, PROBABLY REQUIRES AT LEAST TACIT ACCEPTANCE OF A CONTINUING TURKISH MILITARY PRESENCE ON THE ISLAND AND THUS A DOWNGRADING, FOR THE TIME BEING, OF SOVIET INTEREST IN A UNITARY CYPRUS FREE OF FOREIGN TROOPS. AN ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE OF GIVING PRIORITY TO OBJECTIVE
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NUMBER TWO IS THAT IT WOULD PERMIT THE SOVIETS TO CONTINUE TO PROFIT FROM A TILT TOWARD TURKEY. A DISADVANTAGE IS THAT IT WOULD COMPLICATE ANY SOVIET EFFORTS TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN GREECE.

5. IF THE DISRUPTION OF NATO DOES INDEED BEGIN TO WEIGH MORE IN SOVIET CALCULATIONS THAN THE UNITY OF CYPRUS, THEN WE CAN EXPECT NOTHING BUT TROUBLE FROM THEM IN THE UN. THEY

WOULD WORK TO PREVENT THE CREATION OF ANY CONDITIONS WHICH MIGHT INCLINE THE GREEKS TO RETURN TO THE NATO FOLD, AND WOULD THEREFORE BE LIKELY TO OBSTRUCT SERIOUS EFFORTS AT A SOLUTION. BY DENIGRATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREVIOUS GUARANTEES AND CALLING FOR A LARGER UN ROLE, AS THE PRAVDA ARTICLE DIDN THE SOVIETS MAY BE PREPARING TO SEEK A MAJOR ROLE FOR THEMSELVES THROUGH UN SETTLEMENT MACHINERY.

6. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT REACHED THIS POINT YET, AND THEY MAY NOT. IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REMARKS TO DATE THEY HAVE SHOWN NO DECISIVE SHIFT OF EMPHASIS (REFTEL) AND THEY MAY FEEL THAT THE RISKS OF A NEW COURSE WOULD NOT JUSTIFY IT. NEVERTHELESS, AFTER WEEKS OF FRUSTRATION, THEY MAY FEEL THAT THE EVENTS OF THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS HAVE GIVEN THEM A REAL OPENING--NOT ONLY TO GET THEMSELVES INTO THE CYPRUS PLAY VIA THE SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT ALSO TO STIR ENMITIES WITHIN NATO. IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE US IF THEY SOUGHT TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES, AND THUS TO HAMPER GENUINE EFFORTS TOWARD AN AMICABLE SETTLEMENT. STOESSEL

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